

Arden Election of the 2018 Board of Assessors

Don't forget to vote: Ballots were be mailed to all eligible voters in Arden on Oct 14.

Ballots must be returned by 7:30pm, **Tuesday, Nov. 7, 2017.**

Ballots will be counted at the Buzz Ware Village Center. The public is invited to attend.

For questions about the election, contact the Registration Committee at: registration@arden.delaware.gov

Candidates state their positions

Below are statements from candidates running for 7 seats on the Arden Board of Assessors.

Please check back for any revisions that include up-to-date or additional statements.

BROOKE BOVARD (2014 statement) I'm a native Ardenite and raising my family here, and I've had the honor of serving on the Board of Assessors for most of the last 10 years. I am also the founding mother and first gildmistress of the Georgist Gild. My leasehold is medium sized, on Harvey Road. This is my take on what's important in a member of the Board of Assessors. MOST important is a sense of perspective, and a willingness to get on with the business of governing. People have all kinds of notions about what method we should use to assess. They have all kinds of ways to weigh data, all sources for data (including plain imagination) and a wide variety of political or other agendas. That's how people work, and it's great in a debate society, or an academic setting. But the work the Assessors do impacts, directly, the families in this town. We need a Board of Assessors who understands that, who respects the needs of our neighbors to have an affordable, predictable, fairly administered assessment, so that ordinary people can plan their budgets and do what they need to. We have, over the years, had highly ideological assessors, assessors who served without ever signing the assessment, assessors who never came to meetings, and assessors who proposed an alternate assessment when the votes didn't go their way. Please send assessors who will work, reach a reasonable, real-world group product, and keep the town running, without a lot of drama and grandstanding. That's my priority.

ALTON DAHL (2017) I have been a leaseholder for 47 years and served on most of the Village committees at one time or another. I was elected to the Board of Assessors a number of times in the past and served as Chair of that Board several times. I subscribe to the "Community Standard of Living" definition of "full rental value" used by Boards for about 50 years. I believe that the general formula based on inherent properties of a leasehold used by Boards of Assessors for almost 50 years to estimate relative value of Arden leaseholds is useful and fair. However, I am not satisfied with any of the ways of treating multi-domicile leaseholds we have used. They all treat the multi-domiciles as having equal value, even though some are full standing houses, while others are only one room in another building. Most are somewhere in between. If we want to be fair, we need a better way.

JOE DEL TUFO (2016 statement) I have served for four years as an assessor and feel I've gotten a solid foundation for understanding the needs of the town. I believe in a generally conservative approach to a system that has worked well in the

time I have been involved, and, to my understanding, for some time before that. Even with the recent increase in school taxes, our healthy prudent reserve left us in a position where we did not feel the need to raise rates for this year. I intend to work closely with other assessors on the board to help keep fairness and stability in our town, as our needs and the needs of the county dictate.

CAROL DiGIOVANNI (no statement as of 10/16/17, 4 pm)

ELAINE HICKEY (2017) I have been an Arden resident since June 2005. When people I meet ask me where I live and I say "Arden" they always want to know, "What it is like to live in Arden?" Most local Delawareans assume we live a very idyllic life style. To a great extent, they are right, and I would like it to stay that way. I feel that dedicated residents actively participate in the management of our community to safeguard that all residents are treated fairly. When I was asked to run for the Board of Assessors I accepted, not only because I am interested in learning the process, but I am also concerned about increasing land rents — just like every leaseholder. Sure, taxes and administrative fees keep going up, but what other factors affect our community standard of living and influence "full rental value?" I am a former Village of Arden Secretary (2009-2011) and am currently a member of the Registration Committee and the Archives Committee. I have been active in the Arden Club: compiled and edited the Arden Club Calendar (2006-2009), served on the Arden Club Board (2010-2011) and am an active member of the Shakespeare Gild.

JOHN MARTIN (2014 statement) I am honored to be a candidate to serve as a member of the Board of Assessors in Arden. I want to thank you for this opportunity and for your consideration of my candidacy in the upcoming election. While new to Arden itself, I am quite familiar with the work and theory of Henry George. I happen to teach him, among others, in an upper-level course I teach yearly at UD in American Political Thought. I would do my best to ensure his founding principles are upheld in any and all considerations regarding the tax responsibility entrusted to the Assessors. A 30-year career as an educator has, I think, helped me develop a number of skills that would be considered useful for serving in this position. I am open and tolerant of a wide spectrum of opinions and points of view. I work hard to listen to what others say, and mean. I try hard not to pre-judge matters. And, I like to think that I can work cooperatively with others.

Arden Board of Assessors • Candidate Statements *continued*

MIKE OPELKA (2016 statement) Having lived in Arden for the past eight years, I am a relative newcomer here and would offer a fresh perspective for this post. I also come from a family that shaped the world of real estate appraisal, creating the form used by virtually every real property appraiser in the country. The term “highest and best use of the land” was drilled into our brains from birth. Those who know me are likely aware my fiscal policies lean toward smaller, more efficient and less intrusive forms of government, preferring to inspire personal responsibility over meddlesome leadership. I would appreciate your vote.

DENIS O'REGAN (2017) I've been a leaseholder for 22 years. Tempus Fugit! I've served on Safety for 10 years, am presently serving Buzz Ware Village Center and served as Assessor for 14 years. During that time, I have come to understand and support the “Community Standard of Living” approach to Land Rent Assessment, using the Deed of Trust and the Lease of Arden as our controlling legal documents. The Relative Value of all Leaseholds in the Village is key, and I believe that Full Rental Value must be Fair Rental Value. I am also committed to maintaining a Prudent Reserve that is adequate, but not excessive. I encourage leaseholders to attend Board meetings.

PAM POLITIS (2016 statement) I've been a resident in Arden for 16 years. While I have served in various community activities over the years, I have never been an assessor. In elections, I have typically supported the assessors recommended assessment, but I appreciate the concern and effort of those putting forth alternative assessments. I will work cooperatively and rigorously in serving as an assessor if elected. *Note: Pam Politis was elected in Nov. 2016 and did serve on the 2017 Board of Assessors.*

WARREN ROSENKRANZ (2017) I have served on the Board of Assessors for many years with a priority of applying fairness and prudence principles along with many years of Board documented historic data when determining the Assessment and the Fair Rental Values. If elected I will continue to work toward an Assessment that is Fair and without prejudice toward ALL Leaseholders of Arden. I would appreciate your vote.

SUSAN ROTHROCK (2017) I have been a lease-holder in the Village of Arden for 30 years. Decisions made by the Board of Assessors are a serious undertaking and all points of view have to be considered. The Board of Assessors strives to create an assessment that is fair for all leaseholders while meeting the requirements of the allotted budget. I believe that above all, fair land rent requires that leaseholders pay equal rates on leaseholds affected by the same factors. This includes taking away special privileges granted to a few leaseholders over similar leaseholds. As issues are discussed, I listen to all

opinions, join in the discussion, and weigh all factors when making decisions. I have served on the Board of Assessors for 2 years. I was Chair of the Civic Committee and served for 10 years. As an Assessor, I will continue to work for fair land rent for all leaseholds. Thank you.

KATE THREEFOOT (2017) I've lived in Arden for over 30 years and during that time I have served on the Budget Committee (twice), Audit Committee, and most recently on the Pendulum Fund Advisory Board. I also served on the Arden Swim Guild Board for several years. I served on the Board of Assessors last year. In general, I think of myself as a pragmatic idealist and would bring this thought process with me to the Board of Assessors. I think the way that we assess the land rent in Arden needs to consider the ideal of the full rental value of the land, the current community standard of living, and what it takes to sustain a diverse community. In order to find the right balance, I would start with an open mind, listen carefully to various points of view, and consider the options at hand carefully.

ELIZABETH VARLEY (2017) My family moved to Arden in 1960 and soon became involved with all aspects of Village life. For me it was a natural thing to serve the Village when I became an adult. I have been an Assessor several times as well as taken various Henry George classes. Most of the Boards of Assessors I have served on have used the “community standard of living” approach to determining Arden assessments. While some assessors feel it is necessary to have a “domicile factor,” in my opinion it is no longer valid as we now know that all leaseholds may add one additional in-home dwelling unit. Further discussion may be needed to consider those leaseholds with more than one such unit. I have also served on the Buzz Ware Village Center Committee, Forest Committee and Registration Committee. I am currently a Trustee of Arden.

LARRY WALKER (2017) My experience includes serving as an Assessor two times, and was Budget Committee Chairman. If elected, I will not support the new ADU tax, and urge a return to the previous system. However, I feel that the “A” Rate should be increased, so that the value of simply living in Arden will be a major consideration in setting the amount of the various rates.

TOM WHEELER (2017) 1. Experienced as an Assessor and has also co-written 2 alternative assessments.
2. Supports the traditional land based method of finding full rental value.
3. Believes that radical change executed in a single year to any leaseholder land rent is unfair and unneighborly.
4. As a 30+ year Realtor is concerned that a community history of rent rates changing by 50% in a single year may create a lack of confidence in the stability of the village.

Thank you to all the candidates for their willingness to serve the community.